



WISCONSIN CHEESE MAKERS ASSOCIATION

EST. 1891

Coronavirus Information and Resources

Bulletin Distributed: January 7, 2021

WCMA distributes member bulletins focused on coronavirus information on Thursdays and as breaking news warrants. WCMA delivers electronic newsletters with broader content on Tuesdays. Please contact [WCMA staff](#) with any questions.

EEOC Addresses Questions on Workplace Vaccination Policies

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has released [guidance](#) answering a series of questions related to workplace COVID-19 vaccination policies, focusing on how an employer should respond to exemption requests, based on an employee's disability or religious beliefs. The EEOC document suggests an employer has a right to institute a mandatory vaccination policy to ensure a safe workplace environment. See Section K of the question-and-answer document for full details.

Additional EEOC guidance is expected, as the nation moves closer to Phase 1B of vaccinations, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended will include non-health care front-line workers, including those in the food processing industry.

WCMA will offer members additional resources on their rights, options, and responsibilities related to COVID-19 vaccinations in the coming weeks.

WDHS Expects Specific Phase 1B Plan in Weeks

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) expects detailed recommendations on the Phase 1B vaccination group from the State Disaster Medical Advisory Committee by the end of January, according to Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Occupational and Environmental Health Dr. Jonathan Meiman. While WDHS has already indicated it will follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, including non-health care front-line workers in food processing in Phase 1B, more specificity is needed.

Dr. Meiman also noted to WCMA this week that **employers may wish to begin to**

make lists of employees working on-site, so they might be prioritized as vaccines become available. Meiman said that **on-site vaccination clinics are a possibility** for large employers.

For more on states' vaccine rollouts, see the news articles linked below.

- *Reuters*: [U.S. tops 21 million COVID-19 cases with record hospitalizations as states ramp up vaccinations](#)
- *Associated Press*: [Governors scramble to speed vaccine effort after slow start](#)
- *Wisconsin State Journal*: [About 86,000 vaccinated against COVID-19 in Wisconsin, state says](#)
- *WLUK-TV*: ['It's a long road ahead of us': Wisconsin continues statewide vaccination efforts](#)

WDHS Updates Employer Outbreak Guidance

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS) on Wednesday published a fully-updated [employer outbreak guidance](#). Updates include the following:

- Quarantine guidance has been updated to include new, shortened quarantine period options released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and endorsed by WDHS. A shortened quarantine of 7 or 10 days is permissible if certain criteria are met. A 14-day quarantine remains the recommended option and use of abbreviated quarantine is at the discretion of local and tribal health departments. *(Page 9)*
- Serial testing is no longer a recommended strategy for non-health care settings. *(Page 12)*
- Information on the use and reliability of antigen tests has been included, along with links to relevant testing guidance from CDC. *(Page 10)*

Wisconsin Senate GOP Opposes Coronavirus Bill

Wisconsin Republicans are divided over Assembly Bill 1, a [sweeping coronavirus package](#) Assembly Speaker Robin Vos (R-Rochester) had fast-tracked this week. The Assembly is expected to approve the legislation this afternoon, but Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) [announced](#) this afternoon his caucus does not back it. Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers had also indicated he might veto the bill, should it come to his desk.

Among the 44 distinct provisions in the bill are: broad COVID-19 civil liability protections; a prohibition on employers requiring vaccination; limits on health officers' authority to close businesses, restrict business capacity, or mandate vaccinations; legislative oversight and approval of all federal COVID-19 aid; and a provision to allow lawmakers to divert \$100 million in state funding to COVID-19 programs.

WCMA's Policy Committee is advocating for the interests of the dairy processing industry, as lawmakers and regulators develop new proposals. To learn more and get involved, contact [WCMA staff](#).

Dairy Industry

- *Successful Farming*: [Biden Administration to oversee new coronavirus payments to farmers](#)

Wisconsin

- *WBAY-TV*: [Wisconsin crosses 5,000 COVID-19 deaths, nears 500,000 testing positive](#)
- *WISC-TV*: [Wisconsin's seven-day positivity rate at 32 percent, 175 more hospitalized with COVID-19](#)
- *Wisconsin Public Radio*: [DWD hopes to start paying new \\$300 unemployment supplement in 'next few weeks'](#)

National/International

- *Associated Press*: [U.S. registering highest deaths yet from coronavirus](#)
- *Washington Post*: [CDC foresees spread in U.S. of highly contagious coronavirus variant](#)

Visit [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) for More Resources

WCMA's coronavirus resources page on [WisCheeseMakers.org](https://www.wischeesemakers.org) is updated daily, featuring information on employee safety, regulatory flexibility, operations guidance, federal and state support, and ways to salute your critical, essential staff.

WCMA Key Contacts

Members with pandemic-related questions or concerns should feel encouraged to contact WCMA staff at any time. Here are ways to get in touch.

- WCMA Executive Director John Umhoefer: jumhoefer@wischeesemakers.org or 608-225-7130
 - WCMA Communications, Education, and Policy Director Rebekah Sweeney: rsweeney@wischeesemakers.org or 608-386-3012
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